SOME
MADRAS
LEADERS.

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Some Madras Publicists.

SIR C. SANKARAN NAIR.

Sir C. Sankaran Nair had just become a C. I. E. He was Government Pleader, or had acted as Government Pleader I think. He had the reputation of being the most formidable politician in Madras. I would even add dangerous. He was said to be proud, almost contemptuous, in his treatment of Europeans. He had been the President of the Congress, and so had the brand of the politician. He was reputed to be behind the *Hindu*, of which the editor was a countryman and friend of his, Mr. C. Karunakara Menon. He had founded and edited the *Madras Review*, and had passed it on to Mr. Karunakara Menon, and was thus his known friend. Rumour had convicted Mr. Sankaran Nair of having given thousands of money to Mr. Vijiagragava Chari, the proprietor of the *Hindu*, the most influential paper in the presidency.

This was a massive personality, and I always felt a very mean creature indeed in his presence, a pigmy before a giant. I need not say how got access to him, for it is one of the secrets of the profession. We get introductions from

pretty big people, and are able to carry on quite friendly relations with the foremost in the land. I may say that I was on what may be called quite friendly terms with Sir (then Mr.) C. Sankaran Nair, as I was with every one else, with whom I had to do. The fact is, I had begun to be looked upon as a politician myself, and I never omitted an opportunity to hit it in straight.

'Gentlemen,' I would say, 'you speak of Indian talent. You speak of extremists. Why, while you, politicians go on theory, here I am, the personification of a fact.. I know what it is to serve a European boy who was not born when I had begun service, who has not the academical qualifications that I possess, and yet who is placed above me because—well, he is the son of his father or the brother of his sister. Take my word for it, you have to look to the Indian zone of the Government service to come across real Extremists.'

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I am afraid my chief never got much for the money he spent upon me, for I was never able to get anything seditious or revolutionary from Mr. Nair. He spoke freely, and what is more, he wrote freely also. Occasionally it used to be

a sight to see the Europeans in the Madras Club curse over an article of Mr. Nair's in the *Nineteenth Century* or the '*Fortnightly*.' He always threw a bomb upon the placid political atmosphere. He could not help saying something original in a very original way, and I have heard it said that at a time when his name was mentioned for a Judgeship of the Madras High Court, an article condemning the British police methods turned the Governor (Lord Ampthill) against him.

' I do not believe the rumour'—he said to me as I talked on the effect of his article. I thought I could get something formidable from him against the Governor, but I was, as usual, disappointed. 'If the recommendation had been made, Lord Ampthill would not dare withdraw it for my article. And I do not believe that the Governor or members of the Council are likely to appreciate me. You see, I have never seen any of them except on public occasions. I have heard that they are like the Hindu gods in this respect—would not give except when flattered.'

I could not get anything out of him except what could have been written over his signature in the newspapers. Now and then it used to be

talked about that he wrote an article in the *Hindu* or the *Madras Standard*, and quite a fuss used to be made in the Secretariat.

'How could the writer get the information ?' asked my chief of me one day when a *Hindu* attack on a resettlement issue had thrown the Government into confusion

'I do not know, sir.' I said, 'and it may perhaps be well to post detectives to watch those who call at his house. I had a talk with him on the subject, and he neither denied nor accepted the authorship. I suspect he is the author, but cannot explain why—could'nt form any definite opinion of that massive intellect sir.'

My chief laughed. He agreed that Sir C. Sankaran Nair was a difficult problem. Was he an Extremist? The Extremists said he was their leader. Was he a Moderate? Of course he was a Moderate, for did not the Moderate leaders inspire their very ideas from him? The *Hindu* was an extremist organ under Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar. The *Indian Patriot* was a moderate organ under Dewan Bahadur C. Karunakara Menon. But both looked to Sir C. Sankaran Nair as their leader ; both vied with each other in praising him.

I cannot publish all the stories that I have heard of him, but at home he was an Indian to the very core. He was the least conventional in his dress, and would talk to me with his vast body exposed—just a piece of cloth round his waist and nothing else. The man had no affectation. He was wealthy, but he might be a poor man for all that. He wanted but little, and while everything was neat about him, there were no signs of luxury. Once I saw him seated on the bare floor, while his head was resting on the hand of a sofa !

He would never acknowledge the superiority of caste. If he insisted that the European was not superior to the Indian, he equally insisted that the Brahmin was not superior to the non-Brahmin. I know the intensity of feeling which existed between 'Mylapore' and 'Egmore'—the Mylapore Brahmins and the Egmore non-Brahmins. Sir Sankaran Nair was the leader of the reform party, the Extremist reformers who would remarry widows, destroy at one sweep any claims to superiority by the Brahmins. To-day, when political and social thoughts go hand in hand, I wonder why there should have been any feelings between the followers of Sir C. Sankaran Nair and Mr. V. Krishnaswami

Iyer, but I know that there were feelings, and very deep feelings indeed. Why, when it was whispered that Sir Sankaran Nair's name had been mentioned for the executive councillorship, several cablegrams were sent to the Secretary of State, protesting against the proposed appointment! Lord Morley and his successor Mr. Montague had both known Sir C. Sankaran Nair: and to know him was to admire him. This troubled the Mylapore clique, and at the time the late Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer was appointed, I remember there was a feeling of triumph among one clique and a feeling of personal loss among the other. When Sir C. Sankaran Nair was appointed to the Council of the Government of India there was quite a hue and cry again, and more money was invested on cablegrams—all for no purpose, for Mr. Montague had the happy knack of persisting in what he considered correct

The last time I had anything to do with Sir C. Sankaran Nair was when I was employed as a private detective by an agency—I had since retired—to report who were the politicians with whom Sir Sankaran Nair was corresponding and who were those whom he saw or who saw him while on tour. The *Madras Mail* set the Anglo-

Indian community on fire by alleging that Sir C. Sankaran Nair was giving away information to the press, that he was the force that controlled the press, that if he would press one button, whole India would dance. It was every one's belief that he was behind the Nineteen Members memorandum—which forced the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. It was every one's belief that Indian newspaper editors had read his famous minute against the Government of India despatch before it was submitted. In fact everything striking in Indian politics was traced to Sir C. Sankaran Nair.

In the course of my investigation I discovered one secret—that when Lord Chelmsford was announced to the Viceroyalty, Sir Sankaran Nair wrote to the Indian press. And what did he write ? That Lord Chelmsford should not be abused, that he should be given a chance, that he had heard Lord Chelmsford to be deeply interested in the economic upliftment of India and as an educational expert. If any one remembers the period he can easily recall how the Indian press while asking, almost angrily, who this Lord Chelmsford was and what his credentials were for this great appointment, suddenly dropped the

discussion—the *Patrika* almost bringing ridicule on its head by what appeared a somersault, for it suddenly welcomed Lord Chelmsford, after a characteristic venomous article a day before. And this was due to Sir C. Sankaran Nair. Who could have foretold then that four years hence Sir C. Sankaran Nair would openly fall out with Lord Chelmsford and resign his appointment? After his resignation he became an all India personality, and India looks to him as a great reserve strength.

But in his best days there has always been around him a shade of mystery. While both the Moderates and the Extremists acclaimed him as a leader and while each claimed for their ideals that they had the support and the inspiration of Sir C. Sankaran Nair, the leaders of both the parties would not trust him beyond a certain extent. He was not a party man, and he would never openly take a side, while he had no objection that influences should radiate all sides from him. He was no visionary, and a cause that had nothing to advance it except its audacious impossibility never found the least support or encouragement from him. He would not be a party to throw cold water on the least spark that continued to emit its warmth even in the

remotest corner. Hence his silence over questions raging in public, if he cannot support them. They would not have his opposition. He may disapprove strongly among personal friends, but he was constitutionally unfit to oppose any human activity in India. "We have been sleeping so long," he would say, "that any sign of life is welcome, unless the sleeping man should wake up to walk to the edge of the precipice and fall to the depths below."

Of course, from the police point of view I could do a lot of reporting. I could give the views of Sir C. Sankaran Nair on men and measures—and I must add that except in his case I have not come across any other leader whose private opinion was the same as his public opinion. I have been on the heels of greater political leaders, in the sense that they had larger following, but over their publicly expressed views and views expressed among friends there have always been striking differences, over which my chief and myself have laughed. "God bless these leaders, and may their shadow grow long, for as long as they lead, India can never govern herself"—that was the opinion of my European chief as he detected the double voice of our leaders.

.. I cannot give out the various hints and suggestions I made in course of my reports, but I must say this, that in not one of any man of political thought with whom I had anything to do was there any revolutionary idea, deeds of blood or violence. Everything was constitutional fight and nothing else. And those who declaimed loudest against British faithlessness in public relied most implicibly on Britisher's sense of justice and fairness in private. This by the way.

MR. S. SREENIVASA IYENGER.

"You know Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar," asked my chief one day.

Of course I knew him. He was rising as the first star in the legal firmament. He had rapidly left behind older veterans. He was the son-in-law of Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar, perhaps the greatest name in Indian legal circles.

Stop, man,—said my chief. 'I do not want all that, how many sons he has, but do you know anything of his politics ?'

Politics ? And Sreenivasa Iyengar ? I was surprised, and I told him so. He took interest in social reform, and was the right-hand man of Sir C. Sankaran Nair in social matters. He was courageous in his views and expressed himself equally openly. He had led the agitation for Basu's Civil Marriage Bill. Of course he had wonderful capacity for work, and was associated with Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer in Congress matters. When, over Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer's death, the Extremists had risen to throw mud at the champion of moderation and common sense, Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar had stood out as a supporter of Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer and had

subscribed for a statue. But I had not known him as a politician in the sense that we, police dogs, understand it.

'Well, have an eye on him hereafter' was my official injunction and that is how I came across Mr. Iyengar's trail. As usual I found nothing to mark him out for an enemy of the British, but I knew that there might be politicians and very formidable politicians, who need not necessarily be platform orators or newspaper correspondents. As I happened to approach Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar more closely, I came across what I can only describe as a political ideas factory. A great lawyer, Mr. Iyengar brought a fresh and youthful outlook to his political ideas. He was ready with his opinion, and his opinions were as clear cut as his legal arguments in the High Court which judges heard with respect and sometimes in surprise, that such learned and very original presentment of cases should proceed from one so young. I could find many of the youngsters, the Satyamurtis, sitting around him, drawing him out on current topics, and like Boswells around Samuel Johnson, taking notes, to issue out to the public platforms with the new ideas with which they were charged. Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar was a frank politician.

He had any legal appointment within his reach, His position in the bar had come to be acknowledged, even by his enemies—and a brilliant youngman always has more enemies than friends. That was the case with Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar. Even young men, who moved with him and profitted financially and mentallv, by association with him—he was free with his purse which regularly filed as that of the first lawyer in Madras—had not any glowing words for him, for they were jealous. Young men are prepared to admire those above them in age, but to acknowledge inferiority to one of their own age is hard. Young and old were thus in league against this Mylapore lighthouse. I could see that he brought a new vision to politics. I always thought that he filled—unconsciously or with effort, I cannot say—the place of Sir C. Sankaran Nair in Madras politics, and was giving vent to Egmore politics from within Mylapore.

Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar's opinions on men and measures were given with frankness that almost bordered on recklessness. If he had cared for the Advocate-Generalship or High Court Judgeship he would have spoken with more

respect of a Governor, or a member of Government who had done wrong or made himself responsible for a foolish speech. He spared none, friend or foe, and it was a wonder to me to see him suddenly close his political drawer in his head and open the legal drawer and carry on with his juniors on any case. The lawyer was quite different from the politician ; the one was grave, thoughtful, almost aged, the other was flashy, buoyant and throwing away his ideas in sharp sentences and original phrases ; but both were precise, accurate, and conscious.

If I had heard that Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar would break up Brahmanism, I would have believed it, for as a social reformer he would not tolerate caste ascendency anywhere. He carried his sympathies further than words. He gave advice, money, drew up organizations for the elevation of the depressed classes. His coachman was as much the leader of the Pariahs as his junior was a dazzling politician in the Triplicans beach—both had drawn their inspiration from him. Many a school owed its inception to him ; many a school boy was kept on to his studies with his money. I found him, at the time I was a frequent visitor to him, more enthusiastic for social reform than political

reform. One way I won access to him was by talking less about politics and more on social reform—but eagerly consuming every political idea that fell from him which, I usually found, the next day, was given to the world from the editorial columns of the *Hindu*, the *Indian Patriot* or the *Swadesha Mitran.* Every one of the above papers was edited by well-known persons, but when new ideas were forced to their notice, they succumbed to their novelty and force.

It may not perhaps be believed, but it is a fact that a C. I. D. official can love a political leader he is posted to observe, and I had grown very anxious over the freely expressed views of Mr. Sreenivasa Iyengar. I found that without any necessity for doing it, he was rapidly making enemies on all sides by his free opinions freely expressed. He did not care to please any body: he did not care if he displeased any one. He was young. He was rich. He delighted in law, in which he had the first place. He had absolutely no idea of being employed, however highly, in the Government. His ambitious were first in his profession and second in the amelioration of the submerged classes. He was no respector of persons, and so it happened that

one word he said against a Governor was faithfully carried to his ears duly embellished by honorary C. I. D's.

And do you know of the honorary C. I. D's.? I have heard youngmen execrating my profession, and although my readers may not believe all I say. I sincerely beseech them to believe that I resigned my very well paying job because of the representation of my twelve year old child. Entering his room one evening, my wife was surprised to find the boy weeping over his books. 'What is the matter?' she asked, and at the sound of the voice of love and sympathy, the youthful heart gave way. He burst into terrible, uncontrollable sobs: it almost seemed as if his heart would break. Questions were asked in rapid succession to ascertain the cause of sorrow in a heart so young. Any teacher's harshness? Any friend's oppression? Any student mischief? what could it be that a child should weep in a way as if his heart would burst—he had not been touched by a rod throughout his youth. He was my only son.

It took a very long time before the boy could gather up strength to whisper to his mother that his schoolmates were calling him 'the son of a traitor'—*Desadrohi.* And it had

gone straight to the child heart. I was making nearly a thousand a month, what with travelling allowance and the rest of it. I threw it off without a thought. That was the execration with which I was followed.

But what of some of your leaders? I know and could name many who did more insidious work than the C. I. D. who was paid for his report. These honorary C. I. D's stabbed reputations behind the back. They were *friends* of the man against whom to the Governor or to Council Members they carried every kind of tale, true or false, probable or improbable. I know how these despicable people moved about the Government House. And I say this, that while a European knows how to utilise an Indian intriguer, nothing gives to the sporting Englishman a greater horror and contempt than this back-biting. He despises the creature that pours into his ears tales against a friend, but smiles to draw out more. And as I came to know Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar more and more, I came to know how he was being ruined by his friendly foes who exaggeratingly reported all his criticisms—some of them very deadly—to the officials.

Once I expostulated with him and then he told me that I was not the first man who had thus expostulated.

'Indeed ?' I asked in surprise, 'and are there people who have warned you against yourselves? Any one here who loves you ? '

'Many '—he said, 'and I fully appreciate your concern for me. But God knows I have absolutely nothing to get from the Government. I should be very concerned, indeed, if a High Court Judge should have the least cause even to suspect my judicial honor. I am a lawyer, and I have all that a man can have on earth from it. I get money enough, if money were man's aim, and no Government employment, not even the Governorship, can give me more. And a sense of power ? Why, the faithfulness with which the views I whisper here spread on and on until they reach the Governor in Council ought to gratify me—I could not give more disinterested advice even if I were in the Council. And I derive the greatest satisfaction any man can possibly have on earth by a judicious investment of my earnings in work of amelioration of my fellow-men."

And while his enemies were envying the grandeur of his reception back to public life

from the Advocate Generalship which he had filled with credit, I could understand it. A larger circle had come to know of him than before, and in his vast intellectual power every one had implicit confidence.

Mrs. ANNIE BESANT.

Of course there was not a single C.I.D. officer who had not something or other to do with Mrs. Besant's movements. She was closely watched, and was the most mysterious of all leaders. Her movements were rapid; her visitors were of many nations; the languages heard in the Adayar were unknown to us—they talked in French and German, Spanish and Italian, Belgian and Russian.

I could have easily described the thoughts and sentiments of the most confirmed Indian anarchist. I could have, at first sight or at the first interview, guaged the situation before me when I had to deal with an Indian. Mrs. Besant was incomprehensible. In spite of all the democratic touch about her writings and speeches, she was the Queen of Adayar. She was worshipped. She almost commanded worship. She moved about like a goddess and there were people ready to kiss the sand over which her feet had trodden. It was not easy for any one to have access to her. She was invisible once she entered the stone piles of Adyar. Even the birds could not chirp. Of coures she sometimes condescended to see visitors whom she did not know, that is after her private secretary had seen them,

and after they had sat for half an hour in the awful silence of the place, the river flowing into the sea before them, and aged men, with sweeping beards, poring over books in the library.

Once in her presence, you felt a great influence. Her eyes were upon you, and they held you as in a vice. You felt as if you stood revealed. To my shame I confess that as, after I had been with her for five minutes, she suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence and, pointing her finger at me, with a smile that blazed forth her determination, she said "I know you are a C.I.D. man," I say, I felt I had been suddenly immersed in ice. I could not contradict it. I sat before her self condemned. A wave of infinite pity passed over her face—as she touched me to bring me to my senses again and said: "Ask any question you want, and ask it as artfully as you like, and I shall answer. Forget that you have betrayed yourself. A Government ought to know everything about any one it wants to know, and I am not angry at all. The C. I. D. is, after all, an institution inseparable from modern administrations. You do your work, and I shall help you to earn your bread by telling you faithfully of my movements; and my political views are always to be had from

my newspapers and my speeches. I am Irish; I am an Indian nationalist; and I have every nationality with me. No wonder Government wants to know about me. And you can tell them all that is worth knowing about me and my people—so that you may keep the pot-boiling in an Indian home."

And I got all particulars very accurately. But not to say of the Government, I, who took down what was dictated to me, felt something unutterably mysterious. Everything was true of course, but all the same there was the vague fear of the ground slipping from under me. There was nothing that could not be believed as against Mrs. Besant as she sat in her mansion with her band of worshippers who would have died at her word. She might have had a German army concealed in the Leadbater Chambers. The *Emden* might have had communications with her. A steamer might lie beyond the range of the Port House telescope but be sending a steam boat every night to Adayar. She might be communicating with any one. She might be hatching any plot. You can drift into any thought—only, as you stand face to face with 'Besant Mother' as she was called, her eyes surveying you in calmness and purity, with a

smile over your joys, with a sigh over your griefs, and with a readiness to go out of her way to help you, you felt that she could not harm anything that had a spark of life in it.

I have seen her picking up aged women on her way to *New India* office, women who were dragging themselves along the Beach Road, and dropping them at their doors, I have seen her magnificent car standing opposite a dirty lane where it cannot enter, while she walked up to the stinking habitation of an ill paid compositor of her office, who had come under her notice. Such visits were as important engagements with her as addressing a mass meeting or influencing a committee meeting. She was—it does not require my testimony,—a great character, and as I watched her adorned by lakhs along the road and again abused by thousands in public meetings, I could not help comparing her with great human forces like Napolean, which were never grasped, and perhaps could never be grasped by the average man.

The one failing—from the police viewpoint—that I found in her was her implicit faith in every one—she would even believe me, knowing me as a C. I. D. man. But when the moment

came for action, she was inspired. She took her way. Her friends considered it wrong. Her followers remonstrated. In vain. She took it. She was prepared to take with both her hands the consequences.

SIR S. SUBRAMANYA IYER.

Sir—he has renounced the title—Subramanya Iyer's political career has been an enigma. I have heard it said that he was one of the most prominent of politicians of the early Congress days and narrowly escaped the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress by becoming a high official of Government. He was the right hand of Sir Arthur Lawley, and it was known and believed that no one influenced that unpopular Governor of Madras so much as Sir S. Subramanya Iyer. He is a good man always, good to friends, good to enemies and good to strangers. His influence was exerted always for the good of the public, but in politics he was unadvanced. He was against *swaraj* in the Lawley days and stood as a powerful bulwark to protect the Governor of the presidency against the entrenched warfare that the *Hindu* waged against him. But for Sir S. Subramanya Iyer, Sir Arthur Lawley would have cut a very sorry figure indeed towards the end of his reign. As it was, he had a large party, with the *Indian Patriot* as an organ that, while it did not hesitate to condemn the Government unhesitatingly when wrong, was courageous enough to support the Government against the frenzied attacks of a section of the public.

With Mrs. Besant's entry into the political arena with the war cry of "Home Rule" Sir S. Subramanya Iyer, as the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society and the principal lieutenant of Mrs. Besant, turned what can only be described as a political somersault. From being an opponent of *swaraj*, he wanted it to-day ! He was as resolute in his demands as Mrs. Besant, and while her eloquence captivated imagination and roused the lethargic public, the ringing arguments of the retired Chief Justice of the Madras High Court fell with the unerring precision of a judgment condemning the prisoner at the bar to his doom. It was a powerful combination. It suddenly brought him to the front. The *Hindu* which had called him a 'valetudenarian' when he opposed *swaraj* now lionised him. He had even more influence than Mrs. Besant. His intellect was necessarily even superior to the prophetess and religious dreamer and the wayward child of passing phases of enthusiasm. And thus he came under the notice of the C. I. D.

A frail human structure, all bones and no flesh, one who appeared almost literally to shake before the breeze that blew against his 'Beach House' on the Madras coast, with eyes whose

vision had almost dried up or were rapidly drying up, this sage of 'Home Rule' was the most difficult problem from the police viewpoint. He was inaccessible. He was weak. He was ill. And when one stood before him and saw the emaciated frame that threatened to drop down at any minute, with a faint breath playing almost indistinctly about his mouth, one knew not what to do. He was a walking ghost. His political opponents of the *Justice* school, unable to withstand the incessant rain of political grapeshot aimed at them, contented themselves by calling him senile. But the policeman knew, as words and phrases and sentences fell from him and argument followed argument in the dread precision of a judicial pronouncement, that this bony frame contained a spark of life that was enough and more than enough to set whole India on fire.

There was no unseen influence, of the kind that I felt before Mrs. Besant, in the Beach House. The figure before me was very ordinary, and reminded one more of a Brahmin priest than a potential anarchist. It is only when he spoke that one suddenly felt being immersed in a whirlpool of awe. The eyes shone with a strange brilliance and the prominent nose seemed almost to twinge. The air vibrated with a queer

sensation that stirred the most opaque Senile ? Mad. ? I felt, as I had never felt in any presence, that I was a renegade to my country every time I heard his voice dwelling upon the politics of India.

Of course he spoke at many meetings ; and the close communication kept up between Beach House and Adyar had nothing strange, as both theosophically and politically, they were connected. But the incessant flow to this 'senile' politician, of more vigorous politicians was confusing. What was it happening there ? I have stood for hours opposite the Beach House while the night was far advanced, and the waves broke continuously on the shore, contemplating the light that twinkled in any room and closely following any one issuing out of it —Mr. B. P. Wadia, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Mr. Kasturiranga Iyangar, to speak of a few who were in constant attendance on Sir S. Subramanya Iyer.

The first enquiry that I had to conduct in connection with Sir S. Subramanya Iyer related to a series of articles in the *Indian Patriot* criticising the High Court Judgment on what may be hereafter known as the Alcyone case. The articles were a bold criticism of the

judgment and it was easily seen that the Ex-Chief Justice was behind them.

"I do not see why I should acknowledge the authorship of these articles," he said to me, "and it must be very flattering to the writer, whoever he is, that the Government have seen something striking in them. If their authorship is attributed to me, it would be equally flattering to me that, in my senility, I should be credited with the possession of such powers."

Some of the best speeches that Mrs. Besant has delivered have had their inspiration from Sir S. Subramanya Iyer with whom she always was in constant consultation and who was, if his health permitted it, invariably present at her meetings. Mrs. Besant is a powerful speaker. Her heart was sound about Home Rule and her sympathies were roused. But some of her telling arguments were to be traced to Mani Iyer—she expanded and embellished them and made the most of them. The Home Rule campaign was waged with the intellect of Sir S. Subramanya Iyer and the eloquence of the world's greatest orator.

The veneration felt for Sir Subramanya Iyer was a political phenomenon. He was worshipped by the students for his letter to

America, for his return of the insignia and for the very hot words said to have passed between himself and Lord Chelmsford in the Montagu interview. And now, when he is silent over the non-co-operation movement, the worst that his very worst enemies could say is that out of consideration to his theosophical leader, namely Mrs. Besant, Mani Iyer is keeping silent, but that his real heart is in the movement—in fact the foremost plank in the non-co-operation platform, that of renunciation of titles, originated with him. Mahatma Gandhi must have got the idea from that sensational instance of non-co-operation which vibrated throughout the Empire, and which was copied by Sir Rabindranath Tagore during the Panjab massacres.

Silence, at such an hour, on the part of a leader, is unthinkable, but Sir C. Sankaran Nair is silent also. Lord Morley sank into silence after the declaration of war with Germany.

Mr. K. V. REDDI.

The Hon'ble K. V. Reddi, the Senior Minister of the Madras Government, had long been a marked man. I had nothing to do with him in the political sense. But as a non-Brahmin, I had long learnt to look upon him as the coming man. He was easily the leader of the bar at Ellore and was early marked out as a man of character, whom people can trust. He was not a politician in the sense that it has come to be understood, the prancing, boisterous variety who stump the gallery, threaten to eat fire and swallow the world if necessary. He was more a student than a leader in the days of the Minto-Morley reforms, and his note on the proposals, which he printed, was the first announcement to a wider public than Madras of this lawyer politician of Ellore. Newspapers like the *Bengalee* and the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay reviewed the moderate yet the firm tone of the writer who, although not known as a leader, was not prepared to be a humble follower—but had cut out a path for himself. Although he had participated in politics before, it was after the newspapers had noticed his originality and moderation, which coupled with the outstanding character of the man, secured

for him an easy place in the front, that he became the recipient of applause in larger assemblies like the conferences and the Congress. As a speaker he is fluent, steady, a master of facts which he marshalled with the precision and force that had made him the leader of the bar. He could easily have become an orator, he had the voice and the power of expression, the imagination and intense patriotism. But he had cultivated the matter of fact style of the British Parliamentarians. On the conference platform he soon became a striking figure, and no Madras political assembly was complete without Mr. Venkata Reddi Naidu as a speaker.

When the Andhra movement burst upon the political horizon of Madras, with the intense patriotism of the young Andhra behind it, Mr. K. V. Reddi did not hesitate to throw himself into it, at a time when Mr. B. N. Sarma and Mr. Ramachandra Row were looking askance, the heart sympathising, but the eye directed towards Madras: " What would the Iyers and the Iyengars and the Mudaliars say ? " Mr. K. V. Reddi's views had the necessary freshness and force of a man who spoke and wrote not with any other motive than of expressing what he considered right and

condemning what he considered wrong. Those who can recall the ridicule with which this patriotic movement was first sought to be smothered could alone realize what a sincere and straightforward man Mr. Reddi was.

When the non-Brahmin movement was set afloat, among those who were behind it was Mr. K. V. Reddi. Sir P. Tyagaraja Chetti, always generous and always on the alert to encourage deserving men, easily fixed in his mind the place that Mr. Reddi was to have in the new movement. In the case of Mr. Reddi no one could say that he subdued his expanding nationalism to suit caste prejudice. Nothing of the kind. He had always been a believer in the British connection. He never hesitated to say what he knew of the drawbacks of his own countrymen. He never had even dreamt in his dreams to charter a hundred steamers and put all the Europeans on board one fine morning from the Indian harbour. He had been too close a student of affairs to be carried away by Gandhian imagination, and to no one who has known Mr. Reddi will it come as a surprise that to-day he is the most forceful member of Lord Willingdon's Government, and one who can easily command respect even from his bitterest enemies.

Mr. K. V. Reddi's ascendency is a standing lesson to young men who desire to succeed. Success has come to many in politics by the loud tongue and the reckless demeanour. But modesty, close study, cultivation of an independent outlook in life and fearless expression of one's views need not necessarily be a drawback in politics. On the other hand, it is to these and only these that Mr. Reddi owes his position.

Mr. T. RANGACHARI.

It is only within very recent years that Mr. T. Rangachari came to public life. A busy lawyer, he was for long content with the name and opportunities for service that he could obtain from his profession. The general patriotic upheaval which made politics the very life breath of the people brought Mr. T. Rangachari to the forefront where his eloquence, his effective presentment of a case and, above all, his easy mastery of facts, secured for him a place in the front ranks. People had only to come in touch with him to be impressed with his capacity, and to-day in the Indian Legislative Assembly he is one of the handful of striking personalities one can easily remember.

Mr. Rangachari built up his claims for popularity by solid work in the Corporation of Madras, in the Senate of the Madras University and in the Legislative Council, not by his eloquence alone. He could not as frequently make his appearance on the platform as the public wanted or as a public man ought to have done. The call upon his time from his profession has stood in his way of more rapid rise. It took sometime for him to take his success seriously. He has been accustomed to meet

with success everywhere, and to him, the applause from the audience or the appreciation from the newspaper were of no particular significance. They came to him as naturally as the first place came to a boy who worked hard at his lessons.

In manners he was perfect. He is a good man, a fond parent and one who adhered to the simplicities of life amidst affluence. In politics he was supposed to be extreme, and the C. I. D. had to keep the eye on him when Babu Motilal Gosh of the *Patrika* was his guest, and when he was supposed to share the extreme views of that terrible Calcutta politician. There was a time when Mr. Rangachari openly associated himself with very extreme politics.

Even now he cannot be said to be a Moderate, in the sense that he would blindly follow the Government lead or even, for the sake of expediency, forego any cherished principle. He has the unique distinction, given to not many in public life, that his angle of vision never for once deflected towards official favour. His worst enemies could not say that he had any other motive in his public career, except serving the public. He never ran after the officials. On the other hand he came under their active suspicion, due to his sincere politics and vehement denunciation,

whenever injustice was visible. The worst that could have been said against him—and it was said, as in Madras there is no nobleman who has not been made ignoble talk—was that he took interest in politics only as a pastime, just raising his head from his law books. Mr. Rangachari himself will acknowledge that he had not always had time to study questions, but his speeches show study and sense, and now that he is in the Legislative Assembly, leaving off his practice, his sacrifies for his country cannot be doubted. Madras has high hopes in him.

SIR P. T. TYAGARAJA CHETTIAR.

Sir P. T. Tyagaraja Chettiar, the non-Brahman Leader, the man who had the greatness to refuse a ministership and to nominate his followers for the position, and who, next to the Governor, is the most forceful personality in Madras, was not above suspicion from the police viewpoint. He was, for one thing, a very daring and a very open fighter. He bragged about what he was going to do in the hall or the verandah of the Cosmopolitan Club, and, knowing that every word uttered would be duly conveyed to his inveterate enemies. He considered himself invincible, and laughed loud and long when he was defeated, saying: "I am getting old, and the younger people are cleverer." He always gave not only advance notice but also proclaimed every secret—thus making himself the most hated man in Madras among the Brahmans.

But while Brahman hatred was only the flowers for which he was prepared, and which he counted European mercantile hatred was something to be cared for. Before he had become the head of the non-Brahman movement, he had started the South Indian Chamber

of Commerce, invited the Industrial Conference to Madras of which he was the chairman of the Reception Committee, and his public pronouncements were always characterised by that brutal frankness and almost unveiled malice which, without hurting, left a sharp smart behind. The President of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce was, to the European merchants in Madras, a far more formidable personality than was the leader of the non-Brahman movement to the Brahmins and other advanced politicians.

I remember the very powerful efforts made to keep Mr. Thyagaraja Chettiar from the Legislative Council to represent the Madras Corporation of which he was the leader, and not a single European vote could he get. But when he had brought into being the non-Brahman movement and placed himself at its head, the Europeans in a body voted for him. They forgot the study champion of Indian interests on the commercial zone in the powerful advocate of bureaucracy that he was. To-day he is perhaps the greatest figure in the presidency, and of no Madrasi at any time in its history since British rule could it be said as of Sir P. T. Thyagaraja Chetti that he leads the people.

The prominent trait of the man is character. He was almost a child before scheming politicians and political intrigures, and very often it happened that he was in bad holes for trusting people he ought to have kept at arms length. His pride, however, never forsook him, and if once his word was given, even if he subsequently found him a scoundrel, his word was never withdrawn. Hence it was very frequent for him to warn his friends from association with people with whom he was in full sail. "He is a scoundrel. Do not have anything to do with him." And yet one could see him dashing on with this very man in his car, and helping him with all his strength and all his resources.

To the people around his house and to the innumerable tenants that looked up to him as master, he was almost a superman. They loved him and respected him, feard him and followed him. He was, to them, even more powerful than the Governor himself. In their rustic simplicity they would often dare attack the policeman or the revenue official, confident that their master would protect them if they were right—and Mr. Thyagaraja Chetti was willing to forgo a garden party in Government House to go with the humble tenant in his car to get his business done.

Over what will be memorably remembered as the Tondiarpet sewage farm fight, he spent nearly two thousand rupees from his pocket to defend the *Indian Patriot* which had been dragged to court by Dr. Nair, then the inveterate foe of Mr. Chettiar. Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon, the editor, had written from a sense of public importance. It is even doubtful whether Mr. Thyagaraja Chettiar was a subscriber to the paper whose cause he took up, because that paper had supported the campaign which he was vigorously advocating. Lord Pentland often cursed the day that he pitted himself against this uncrowned King of Madras, —but Lord Pentland lived long enough to shake hands with Mr. Thyagaraja Chettiar, and it is very safe to say that if Lord Pentland was not universally execrated in Madras, as he was all over India and by the Brahmin and political zone of Madras, it was due to the influence and position of Sir P. Thyagaraja Chettiar as the leader of non-Brahmins and the leading figure in the social life of the city.

'Let this be,' and if Mr. Chettiar had said it, it was so—whatever the opposition, however great and however organized, it was splintered into shivers by this Napolean of Madras.

Although the non-Brahmin movement was very unpopular and its leaders were all hated, the leader Mr. Chettiar was honored and respected, for the simple reason that he never hit below the belt. He hit the best, but it was a frank, open enemy that Mr. Kasturinga Iyengar or Sreenivasa Iyengar felt themselves honored to face and fight.

It is false to say, as has been often said of Sir P. Thyagaraja Chettiar, that he was a Brahman hater. He never hated Brahmins because they were Brahmins, and he has more friends among Brahmans than among non-Brahmins. Rather would it be expressing oneself truly of a forceful personality like Mr. Chettiar's that he had more enemies among non-Brahmins than Brahmins. He hated everything that was not transparent and honest and above board as he was. He was for all, and the poorer, the more forward was he. But he was conservative, deeply conservative, and opposed social reform tooth and nail. He spoke of the 'broom stick' when Basu's civil marriage bill was discussed. He was almost a blind partisan of the past.

KASTURIRANGA IYENGAR.

Before he purchased the *Hindu* and strode forward boldly into the political arena, Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar had no pretensions to public life. He was the brother of Mr. Sreenivasa Ragava Iyengar, one of the ablest officials of the Government who had written a very valuable book to prove that Madras had uninterruptedly prospered under the British. Mr. Iyengar had made his pile at Coimbatore as a vakil, and had settled down in Madras to practise in the High Court. He had not established himself as a lawyer in the metropolis. It is not easy, however intellectual one may be, to come up in the Madras bar suddenly.

As the legal correspondent of the *Hindu* and as the author of its well-known Coimbatore letters, he had earned a reputation which any journalist may envy. Mr. Karunakara Menon, the then editor of the *Hindu*, held Mr. Iyengar in high esteem, and—I speak from hearsay—encouraged his writings. Some of the best articles in the *Hindu* were traced to Mr. Iyengar, and in his generous appreciation of a brilliant writer, Mr. Menon often spoke of his powers at the Cosmopolitan Club where the Indian intellectuals met—official and non-official.

The finances of the *Hindu*, never known at any time before the Iyengar regime, for their prosperity, were at the end of 1904 at a very low ebb, and all eyes were turned to Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar. He had the money. He had the talents; he had the journalistic spirit, and in his hands, the *Hindu* has been a power. It has attained the highest prosperity ever attained by any newspaper owned by an Indian. We are not concerned with the business talents of an astute lawyer who boldly launched a lakh of rupees on a business which has always been known, as a failure and who built it up to its present position. We have to deal with the public man and politician who, almost unknown hitherto, burst upon the firmament as an opposition and to-day is one of the giants in South Indian public life.

'He is only a brother of Sreenivasa Ragava Iyengar—he can be easily turned to side the Government,' was the opinion of a high official as Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar's name was first mentioned in official circles as a potential source of danger. He was the brother of Sreenivasa Ragava Iyengar in the sense that he had the same force of character and power of intellect, but the one was the servant of Government and

was true to it, the other was the servant of the people, and was resolved to remain true. The result was that—I was soon in his tracks.

Of course there was nothing to report in the shape of conspiracies to overthrow the Empire. But there was everything to report on the day-to-day work of an individual of consummate abilities, whose exterior calm was a very false index to the volcanic fervour within. He threw himself into the spirit that blazed forth from Bengal over the insults of its partition. While he removed from the rushing stream of national life from Calcutta the blood and bones that the bomb of the assasin had thrown upon it, he drank with both his hands the life giving waters. The *Hindu* deliberately walked into what was called Extremism. It rushed—madly as was thought even by Mr. Iyengar's friends--to support the nationalist spirit wherever it was found, and was the champion of Swaraj. Names held in honour and respect did not prevent Mr. Iyengar from entering into the lists with them, and very soon a forceful figure like Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer, the Member of Council of the Madras Government, was his open enemy. Mrs. Annie Besant, whose power was becoming irresistable, felt herself pulled up from Mount Road as she

was slipping from Home Rule to the Reforms. The popularity of the *Hindu* was seen in the helplessness of its enemies who rumoured against newspaper despotism and Mr. Iyengar's want of journalistic fairness —in letting his columns being used against the cause he was advocating! Sir Valentine Chirol had said something harsh to Mr. Iyengar when as a witness before the Public Services Commission. 'I am not here to learn journalistic ettiquette from you,' was the firm answer of Mr. Iyengar as he rose from his seat in disgust. He had become a power. He knew it. He exercised it.

Records of Indian journalism would not give a parallel to the persistence and power with which Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar attacked Sir Arthur Lawly, and yet the Government dare not enforce the Press Act against him. That was at one an acknowledgment of his power. Later, however, Lord Pentland, who had grown callous over repression, brought the *Hindu* under the Press Act, but it never affected the tone of the *Hindu*. It kept itself within bounds of law—able lawyer that he is—but had his eyes rivetted on the people. He did not hesitate to sail with the wind, but he was better known as the starter of the wind itself.

From the police viewpoint, Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was the most harmless—he was not a speaker, and I have my own doubts whether he has any temper at all to lose. Of course the *Hindu* came out with his powerful articles, but that was for everyone to read. It is the speaker, not necessarily at public meetings but at round tables, that gave the trouble. Mr. Iyengar was a quiet man. He said what he had to say in calm deliberation, not in flashes of wit which echoed around. His wealth has given him at least as much influence as his success as a journalist—and Iyengar orthodoxy went so far as to receive him with religious honors on his return from England. It would never have done so with another man.

Mr. B. N. SARMA.

I first met the Hon'ble Mr. B. Narasimhaswara Sarma as a member of the Lilliputian Legislative Council of Fort St. George, which sat for a few hours and transacted business, which consisted of a few interpellations and a round of budget speeches. Then Mr. Sarma was not what is now understood by the term "public man." He was a successful lawyer, who had made his pile, and who was a 'popular representative' in the council where, along with the late Mr V. Krishnaswami Iyer and Mr. Kesva Pillai, he was a known man. Even then he had shown himself the man of conviction and courage that has easily given him an ascendency over his compeers. Even then he had displayed that accurate grasp of statistics and the patience to pour over a problem that have given to every speech he delivered in the council a touch of authority. He is a close student of figures. He never was a believer in mere words. He entrenched himself strongly behind figures and was always a fierce assailant of bureaucracy— when they deserved attack.

It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that Mr. B. N. Sarma soon rose to be a leader, a familiar figure on platforms, president of

conférences, committees and the rest. He was one of the very earnest men in public life in Madras, a very blunt man who, in private talk, spoke out his views on men and matters. He was fearless. He was independent. He was a politician not because he wanted a High Court Judgeship or an Executive Councillorship but because he could not help giving vent to what he knew and what he felt. This was acknowledged by the public who honoured him, trusted him and followed his lead, when, owing to the powerful opposition that Mrs. Besant had roused by her theosophical controversies over Alcyone and Leadbater, Mr. Sarma did not hesitate to shake hands with her in public and give credit to her patriotism for India. When Mrs. Besant imported her Home Rule flag, Mr. Sarma was among the foremost under its shadow. There was no Indian leader more ready and eager for sacrifices during the Besant persecutions than Mr. Sarma.

But when the Reform Scheme was published and, later, when it took shape as an act, Mr. Sarma, consistant with his political career, welcomed it instead of rejecting it. Unlike Mrs. Besant he did not first describe it as worthless and then as Godsend. He took it as

a first and every substantial instalment, and as an expression of good faith of the British. He was unpopular with the younger generation who wanted only fire and nothing else. They abused him as they abused everyone who was not prepared to swallow fire. But as he was not flattered by praise, so he was not depressed by censure. He was the same blunt, honest, earnest man. He had his own conceptions of duty. He went about discharging it as he thought best.

To one who has watched his political career, nothing was perhaps more natural than that he should have risen to support Lord Chelmsford in the Congress, because the Congress was attacking him as a monster, forgetting all his good points and remembering only his bad points. It was just like Mr. Sarma to rise and earnestly have his say, and wondering, when friends remonstrated, why they should remonstrate at all. He is no party man. He is not guided by party motives. It was a pity that he should have been appointed to the Council after his Congress speech, for his enemies—a Moderate has no friends—considered it a Chelmsford return for his Amritsar speech. But if Mr. Sarma accepted it, it was not for the salary, - he had

suspended his practice for politics long before non-co-operation was thought of—nor for the position—he has been a rough saint all along—but for the opportunities to serve the public. And he will serve the public, in his own way, which has always been disinterested.

SIR P. S. SIVASWAMI IYER.

Of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer it may well be said that he found himself a politician when he was appointed member of the Executive Council. No one had heard of him as a politician. He himself never laid claim for being one. He was a sound lawyer, and for character and soundness, could best be compared to the late Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar. He was held not only in respect but almost affection by the bar. He was quiet, almost retiring; he shunned public gaze. He was a lawyer. To him the world was contained within the four walls of the High Court.

If he had been appointed Judge of the High Court, it would have been unexceptional. It would have been one of the best appointments, and one more Indian name would have lighted up the brilliant record of Indians in the bench. As Advocate-General, he has had a reputation that spread almost all over India. When he was rooted out of the judicial soil and forcibly transplanted on the executive field, it was a fact that what was undoubtedly a loss to the judicial hemisphere of the Government was not at all a gain to the executive hemisphere.

The five years that Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer spent in the Executive Council were the worst that Madras had experience of under the Morley reforms. No one could feel that there was an Indian in the Councils of Government. Lord Carmichael found him as useful an agent in his campaign against the Indian Civil Service as Lord Pentland found him yielding in his campaign of repression. Under Lord Carmichael, his name began to be whispered as a courageous Indian. It was, in fact, a source of spirited discussion in the clubs as to how the quiet lawyer could develop what may be called the Congress conception of public affairs. Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer was never an active Congressman, although, as in the case of Lord Sinha, antiquarian research has shown that he was a delegate in one of the Congresses. People were almost sure that he would fail where a pitched battle had to be waged with the bureaucracy, where the Indian side of a question had to be advanced with all the warmth of sentiment and all the rashness of patriotism. The best that was expected of him was that he would bring a judicial temperament to bear upon questions. And even to-day, when all is said and done, if his name is spoken of

with respect—although he was the colleague of Lord Pentland—it is due to his force of character and the conviction that every evil deed has been done, if not actually against his protest, certainly not with his connivance. This is a great record indeed. Another Indian, with the record of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, would to-day be the most unpopular of public men. We get an idea of what character can do for even an incapable executive officer in the acknowledged position of the leader of the Moderates that Madras has unhesitatingly accorded to the Indian spirit of the Pentland administration.

I do not want to rake up the past—the newspapers are full of the echoes of the failure of the Indian Member who looked on feebly as Mrs. Besant was deported, and who acquiesced in a junior being appointed vice-president of the Council without a protest. There are rumours of brilliant notes of dissent left on record by Sir P. S. Sivasawmi Iyer—after his colleagues had outvoted or outwitted him. His record as an executive officer is a warning that a politician cannot be made to order, that one must be accustomed to take a broad view of affairs before one can do justice as a representative of popular thought or sentiment. If Sir P. S. Sivaswami

Iyer had refused the Executive Councillorship, his name would have been, after Sir Rash Behari Gosh's, the foremost in the legal world.

But if he had not been the Executive Council Member for five years, he would, perhaps, have never been a member of the Council of State to-day. He would never have felt the call of politics. He would have been a lawyer, arguing his case when the non-co-operation wave was beating outside. To-day there is no Indian who has not read his masterly analysis of the Esher Committee report in the Council of State. That public spirit he owed to his having been in charge of the Indian Volunteer Movement in Madras—during the war. He gave his attention to the question, and his massive intellect soon grasped the principal issues. His judicious temper, his trained advocacy and, not the least, his undoubted prestige as a retired member of Government, endow his speeches with a unique force and authority which no Sir William Vincent can brush aside. The Government is not merely rallying a Moderate when they accept a resolution of Sir P.S. Sivaswami Iyer : they are openly acknowledging what is due to a great man who braved popular contumely by his faithful adherence to the bureaucracy in critical

times—and when such a man rises up to protest, his voice must surely be heard.

I have great hopes of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer. He has learnt by his failure, and I look forward to see him the most uncompromising champion of popular rights. Already he has made his mark, and although he could not rise above the narrowness of being a mere Moderate leader when he indulges in half-hearted flings at non-co-operation, his force in the Council Chamber is real and is readily acknowledged. There is absolutely no whisper that he aims at appointment. He is wealthy, and is giving out of his wealth freely to education. He has exercised power without knowing the pleasures of popularity. He will, I hope, live to enjoy the immeasurable happiness of being looked to as leader by a large following. This is not difficult. This is easy. If, as he has studied the army question, he should study the other questions affecting the people and raise his voice, he will be the idol of a large population.

KESAVA PILLAI.

Gooty Kesava Pillai—now the Government has dubbed him Dewan Bahadur Kesava Pillai —is eminently a creation of Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon, and explains how a newspaper editor can make and unmake people. While in the *Hindu* and later in the *Indian Patriot*, Mr. Menon was an ardent admirer of the unknown yet sincere moffusil worker whose mind was large enough to hold the world. Gooty Kesava Pillai was the lighthouse of public opinion outside Madras City. He was ready to throw himself—literally—heart and soul into any kind of public work or social work. He lived for the poorer section of the people. A capable lawyer, all his talents and all his resources were at the disposal of the poor, and he has been known to take the case of the innocents right up to the top in search of justice.

A brilliant writer to the press, a fearless critic and a broadminded man, free from malice of any kind, Gooty Kesava Pillai was a terror to the erring official. He exposed him; and when he deserved it, most mercilessly, indeed did he explose him. Every Indian newspaper in Madras opened its columns to him and

published the most sansational exposure with eager enterprise. Mr. Kesava Pillai never wrote what he could not prove : if anything, he was overgenerous to his most bitter foe. Known as a terror to the official, both Indian and European, and a favourite of the poor who loved him and followed him, Gooty Kesava Pillai had only to be known to be loved by all. And it was left to the editor of the *Hindu* and then of the *Indian Patriot* to discover this prodigy and place him before the public. Once the popular eye was rivetted on him they easily discussed the hero that he has ever been.

" I would never have come to the public but for Mr. Karunakara Menon," was the generous acknowledgement of this generous man. Mr. Kesava Pillai was diffident of success when he sought election to the Legislative Council—the *Indian Patriot* was his organ. When, as the champion of the poor, he assailed the jail policy of the Government and startled the officials by his direct thrust—he used his newspaper style in Council speech—it was the *Patriot* that backed him up. He hit hard and hit always at the jail policy until he had introduced a good many reforms. He is the father of the Jail Commission, although, being an all India affair,

the resolution was moved in the Viceroy's Council by his friend Mr. Ramarayangar who is, at present, a minister to Madras Government.

'When Mr. Kesava Pillai was not in the jail he was in the forest," was the taunt of a Government official, describing his persistent attack of the forest policy. It resulted in the Madras Forest Commission, and the establishment, as a result, of the Forest *panchayets*. When Mr. Kesava Pillai spoke in the Legislative Council, he spoke with his whole heart, as if he was the sole champion—which he most undoubtedly was—of the poor who were outside the Council to hear him. He was accessible to all, and provided there was injustice anywhere, you can rely upon Mr. Kesava Pillai for a champion. He did not hesitate to interpellate, to move resolutions, to give notice of bills.

His reputation was made in the council and in the newspaper. But he had not the wide information borne of close study and application. He was a genius and his heart took in at a glance any difficult situation. He had no patience for details. He picked up the most salient points and made, like Napolean, rapid movements and invariably reached his goal.

One secret of his success was his moderation. He could never hate. He was prepared to brave the direct anger of the worst Governor for the sake of the wretch imprisoned in the jail, but he would never hate a European official because he was European. He never attributed evil to a European official because of his race. He always remembered that among his own countrymen he could come across worse specimens than the worst European or Anglo-Indian official. This freedom from racial prejudice gave him a moral ascendency which was invaluable. When Mr. Kesava Pillai was excited, every one knew that it was the revolt of a good and a great mind, above all self, and wholly concentrated upon the public weal.

There is no more striking proof of his absolute unselfishness than the vigour with which he pitted himself against what is known as the non-Brahmin movement. He could easily have been its leader. The Government was ready to hail a hero if he would only place himself at its head. The ignorant section of his own castemen wondered why he, a non-Brahman, who had suffered at the hands of Brahmins due to their cliquishness,—should not use all his influence on the side of Dr. Nair and Mr. Thyagaraja

Chettiar. He was unpopular among his own castemen. He was looked askance by the officials. He was lionised by the Brahmans, not because they loved him more but because they hated the non-Brahmin movement. He was prepared rather to efface himself from public life than change the principles of his lifetime! He was never known to be bitter—but he was most bitter against the non-Brahmin movement. And, owing to his exertions, the progressive sections of the non-Brahmin community combined together and, although a minority, stuck to liberal principles in politics.

In these days when politics is a serious study it is doubtful if Mr. Kesava Pillai would be prepared to hold his own as a political force. He is aged. He could not apply himself to abstruse questions. Questions where the poor are concerned will always find in him a study champion. Social advancement, in every direction, will have his sympathy. But already he is becoming a back number, and amidst the flashes of non-co-operation and the giddiness of public excitement, he must flit a trembling shadow behind the scenes. That he is respected and held in esteem was shown by his election to the Vice-Presidentship of the Legislative Council.

If he had been a retrograde instead of an advanced non-Brahman, his name would have been the first to suggest to Lord Willingdon for ministership. And as a minister, Dewan Bahadur Kesava Pillai could have done the greatest good to the greatest number of his fellowmen. He owes his position to his passion towards his brethren.

' SIR P. RAJAGOPALA CHARI

Of no official could it be said as of Sir P. Rajagopalachari that he was a public man in spirit although an official. I have nothing to say about his official career except that, from a deputy collector, he rose to the position of Member of Executive Council, and the first Indian Vice-President of the Legislative Council. Very early in his official career he had the reputation of a capable servant, who acted with precision and force. Almost at the threshold of his youth he was entrusted, as the Dewan of Cochin, with the administration of an important state. Cochin had the reputation of being a highly educated state, but the administration was not vigorous. It was rather old fashioned, when the successful ruler was he who had the largest amount in the treasury. Young Rajagopal brought to play those modern instincts which politicians had then not even begun to preach and the press had not even begun to espouse. On the other hand, when he boldly launched the Shoranur Cochin Railway, he was met with opposition not only from the Conservative Himalayas in Cochin State—this we can understand—but from such well-known advocates of political reforms and advancement as the

Hindu. Mr. Rajagopalachari knew what he was about, and his greatest advantage was that he had a highly educated and polished people, whose first suspicious calmed, rendered them a source of strength to him. If to-day Cochin is the advanced state that it is, it is not only due to Mr. Rajagopalachari, but it is the remarkable result of one man's work, in the face of unrelenting, though uninformed, critcism. He had, of course, the support of his ruler, without which he could not have done anything.

Some years after his Cochin experience came Travancore, with a people, if anything, more advanced and an area and population several times that of Cochin. His work in Travancore was marked by the same progressive spirit, and succeeding generations will remember his Nair Legislation with gratitude. Thoroughness and efficiency marked every branch of administration, and, in his work, he had the unstinted co-operation of a class of officers who could be compared with the best of their class in British India.

On his retun to British service, he had the prestige of having tried his hands independently, and having succeeded. Young Civilians treated him with adoration, the old with respect. Lord Pentland was struck with the readiness

and resource of this pre-eminent Indian officer whose attitude was dictated by disinterestedness and who brought into service a courage that was wonderful. He unerringly placed his hands on the right solution and convinced by his work his most malicious opponents first of the unfairness and thus of the futility in opposing him. If it was given to him to build up new Cochin and new Travancore, it was his equal good fortune to build up new Madras, in the sense that he was the father of the co-operative credit movement. He braved the suspicions of the populace with the same courage which he had displayed in Cochin, and no one will suspect that I am simply praising my casteman when I say that if an officer of the tact and resources of the Dewan Bahadur had not been first entrusted with this novel experiment, the history of that movement would not have been what we are able to record to-day.

As the executive council member, he exercised an influence over the Pentland Government which saved it from popular execration. His hand was visible everywhere, and if he failed, it was because reckless political agitation had roused such opposition among

bureaucrats that only a powerful force like a popular and democratic Secretary of State could break it. With a pupular Governor like Lord Willingdon, his influence was far more perceptible and it endeared him at once to the public.

The one surprising feature about Sir P. Rajagopalachari's career is that, even as an official, he was looked upon as a public man. The European officials found in him a volcanic intellect. He was not prepared to go along the barren beaten thoroughfare. He was not a red tape machine. He was a very human agency indeed, and always grasped at original methods. The public had discussed in him, as the Dewan of Cochin and Travancore, an ideal Indian statesman, with large grasp of questions, and his work as the Registrar of Co-operative Credit Societies had secured for him the unstinted admiration of the public. When, therefore, his name was proposed for the executive councillorship, there was not a rumour. It was never felt that the place reserved for a non-official was going to an official : it was felt, on the other hand, that the office was at last going to an Indian who could not be pulled by the ears by the civilian

secretaries, on the ground that he did not know office procedure, and who had the patriotic spirit chastened by practical outlook. The appointment roused the liveliest expectation, but as it is, with Lord Pentland as master, he could not show himself. It is, however, creditable that his regime was not marked by any of the reactionary steps that might have startled India.

Lord Pentland had a high opinion of Sir P. Rajagopalachari, although it was an open secret in Indian circles that the Indian Member took long leave to go to England, as much to escape contact with the Pentland contagion as to familiarise himself with the condition in England, for efficient discharge of his duties in the regime awaiting an Indian after the Government of India Act.

As President of the Madras Legislative Council he has steered through a difficult position most skilfully. A Brahmin among non-Brahmins, he has always held the balance even. The non-Brahmins look upon him as one of themselves, for his sympathies are broad and deep, while in all matters that come-up before the Council, he is an Indian first and last.

MR. T. V. SESHAGIRI IYER.

Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Iyer, now one of the most advanced members of the Legislative Assembly, owes his position to his interest in public affairs. It was never said of him as of the Sreenivasa Iyengars to-day or as the Iyers of yesterday—Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer and Mr. Sundaram Iyer—that he was a great lawyer. He was a successful lawyer. He was even a front rank man, but he would have been to-day in the ranks of the brilliant mediocrities among his profession if he had not developed a sincere and persistant public spirit. He represented the Madras University in the Madras Legislative Council, and easily made himself one of the front rank men. A ready speaker, with a cutting tongue and an easy sarcasm, he proved himself so much of a nuisance to the authorities that I have heard it said that when his name was mentioned for a Dewan Bahadurship during the Sir Arthur Lawley dynasty, that Governor ran his pencil through and put in that of Mr. K. Narayana Raw—now dead.

Not only in the Legislative Council but on the public platform and in the press, Mr. Seshagiri Iyer was prominent. Presidentships of conferences came to him as a matter of right, and

his speeches were marked by a bold presentment of facts, Judicious arguments and reasoned conclusions. All the advantages that a lawyer generally possesses when he takes to public life were prominent in him. He was respected by all and loved by many for his condescension and generosity. He was ready to represent real grievances to the government: and being a forceful member of the Council, his representations had naturally an added value. A man of high character, free from the disadvantage of being too young, he had a prestige as a publicist which government was not slow to appreciate and to acknowledge. He was offered a Judgeship of the High Court. Of course there is an school of thought that is against a public man accepting an appointment under Government, and to them, his conduct naturally could not commend itself. But to-day, when his voice is heard in the Legislative Assembly and his views are read with interest in the press, no one will doubt that his public spirit had been dried up by appointment. His reputation as a judge is as high as that of any living Indian High Court Judge, while his old fire and intimate knowledge of public affairs bring him into even more exalted pre-eminence in public life.

Mr. Seshagiri Iyer, as a politician, belongs to that rare variety known as the frank. He is not designing. He has absolutely no idea about himself when he handles a question—he only thinks of the question, and nothing but that. That is why he is to-day one of the few non-party men we have, who has the confidence of both schools of politics, who can rise and support non-co-operators without being misunderstood by the moderates, or whose condemnation of Extremism does not expose him to the wild attacks we have unfortunately learnt to associate with them. He is held in respect. He has earned it by his devotion to the public cause and by his high character.

MR. C. VIJAYARAGAVACHARI.

If he had not been elected the president of the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress, it would never have struck me to write about the man. That Mr. Vijayaragavachari is a very learned man, and that he could, whenever he liked, be fearless, is well known. It would be very correct, indeed, to say that at the present time, there is not another Indian who has the same knowledge of Indian politics or world politics. And he is a master of the English language, able to express himself very effectively.

But somehow, he has been a politician by fits. He has a very large number of European friends: and although he came into public life over the imprisonment in connection with the Salem riots, he was very soon settled down to peaceful life. "Salem Vijayaragavachari" was one of the forceful figures of Madras life during the early council days, and, as I have said, he could be very fearless when he liked. So he did make an impression, and he always managed to renew this impression whenever it suited him, by a signed article in the *Hindu* or a timely speech on any current topic. He never dealt with a subject but in an original manner—he

said things not said before; hence he caught the public eye like a lightning flash.

When he was returned to the Viceroy's Council by the Madras Legislative Council, it was found that he owed his election to the largest number of Europeans who had voted for him. But for his European votes he would never have entered the Council. Yet he was the most uncompromising critic of the Defence of India Act and opposed himself, with the might of a powerful army, to the solid phalanx of the bureaucracy. His European supporters were startled at the formidable character of 'their' representative, and, I think, one of them wrote to the *Madras Times* differing from his views. But whole India rallied round him. He was the foremost member of the Imperial Council, not even Mr. Ghokale excepted. The newspapers vied with one another to quote and to praise him, and when the presidentship of the Congress was under consideration his name suggested easily to many—only Madras refused to have him.

And why? There was the rub. Madras would not accept his leadership. There was what may be called the Iyer party, as opposed to the Iyengar party, and the Iyers went in for

Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghava Iyer who can best be described as a brilliant mediocrity. But for Madras standing in the way, Mr. Vijayaragavachari might have been president of an earlier session of the Congress.

And why should the Iyer party have gone against him ? For the simple reason, so far as I have been able to gather, of his desultory excursion into politics. "What are his views on the burning topics?" they asked. "To-day, should he keep quiet ?" was the question. And even his best friends could not help wishing that Mr. Vijayaragavachari had placed himself as a leader. This he would not. He would occasionally sally out. This was all that he cared for. He loved his country, for he had studied its problems and braved the jail. But it seems that he loved ease, retirement and resting on his laurels.

His powerful criticism of the Montford Chelmsford report at the Madras Provincial Conference once again secured for him the easy front place in politics that he could whistle for. His speech was quoted, as usual, all over the country, and the Moderates reeled under the blow. Young India rallied under his banner, and in the Congress conclaves he was a force.

He was the leader. And he could hold his own —even against Mr. Gandhi.

He had a great opportunity at Nagpur—he lost it. He was, and he has always been, too practical a politician to be a spiritualist like Gandhi. He could not be a blind non-co-operator, aiming at the destruction of western influences. If anything, he was an aggressive exponent of advancement on western lines—in matters educational and political. In social reform he look no active part. It would perhaps be more correct to describe him as retrograde; at any rate even his blind followers would vote him conservative. He had too much practical advice to give to non-co-operationists to be at all palatable to them. He had also too much shrewdness to underate the force of opposition against him if he should boldly set himself against the irresistable popular current. His speech fell flat and he is not to-day the all India leader he might have been.

As I contemplate his powers, I cannot help being oppressed with a haunting feeling that the stars are not propitious to him. He has in him all the elements of greatness, such as are united in very few others. But he has been content with flashes. He has not cared to be steady.

He has woed his present eclipse by unknown youngsters who are unworthy to unlosen the latchet of his shoes. Of no great public career can it be said, with the element of truth as of Mr. Salem Vijayaragavachari's that it has had always upon it the tragic shadow of failure. Not even the late Mr. Ghokale could claim to the fund of information that Mr. Vijayaragavachari had. An able lawyer, an astute politician, a close student of history, he could have easily placed himself at the head of the nation at a crisis and carried it successfully to its goal. But he has been a victim to an unrelenting fate dogging his footsteps. The result is that the country has not the benefit of all the great powers that are undoubtedly his.

C. P. RAMASWAMY IYER.

Young, rich, intellectual and beautiful, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer's career will be watched by all with interest, with affection by his elders, with envy by his contemporaries, with admiration by his juniors. That he attracted the notice of the Joint Committee of Parliament when he gave evidence on the Government of India, is perhaps the best testimony, alike to his capacity and his personality. In Madras he is one of the most popular of public men—and this is saying a great deal, indeed, when one realizes that nowhere in India do personal feelings count for more than here. The best friend, as he appears to the eyes, often harbours the most malicious thoughts ; and one is bewildered by the amount of intrigue and back biting going on.

As a lawyer, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer is at least as well known as a politician ; and he is as well known as a philanthropist as a politician. To the student, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer is a literary prodigy who can talk as freely and as instructively on Shelly's poetry as on the law of sedition or India's need for fiscal independence. Hence the admiration for his towering genius, combined to this extreme youth, his artless

behaviour, his princely courtsy and open bearing and you get an idea of one of the most potential of political figures in the southern presidency.

Of course he has his detractors. Somehow —it is very unfortunate, but it is a fact,—there is some strained relationship between Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the hero of the Aiyer section of Brahmins and the heroes of the Iyengar section of Brahmins. Only those who are in the know can realize this : and even those who know it best can least explain it, much less prove it, none the less, the feeling is there. When Mrs. Besant was praising Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the counsel who appeared against her in the Krishnamurti Adoption case, for his gentlemanly conduct of a case which lent itself to violent invectives, the Iyengars, who had closely associated themselves against Mrs. Besant, were even prepared to forget that Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer won the case in their jealousy against the man openly praised by the public who read his brilliant address and by the party whom he had defeated. Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer had many a proud day in the High Court, but this was one of his proudest. But his legal opposition to Mrs. Besant did not blind him, as he very closely came into contact with her, to her

character and attainments, and Mrs. Besant had no more faithful follower or devoted political adherent than her opposition counsel. It is doubtful whether Mrs. Besant's name would have been so popular in her first political propoganda if she had not been openly and closely associated with the lawyer whose ability had defeated her in the High Court.

Until the Montague-Chelmsford report was published the political relationship between Mrs. Besant and Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer was very close—so much so that "Besant and Ramaswamy Iyer", was as intimate a partnership as any legal house. Both wrote and spoke alike. Both were actuated by the most selfless motives. Both worked with a vigour and spirit that were reluctantly acknowledged even by their most bitter enemies. It was then that young Ramaswamy, who was the pet of the late Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer, and who was more frequently sent for by Lord Pentland than any other public man, came under the very prominent notice of the C. I. D. He was, however, 'easy' from the police viewpoint. He was frank, open, and it was ridiculous, of course, to associate him with anything with which the Criminal Intelligence Department has ever had to deal.

The political partnership, as I had called it, between Mrs. Besant and Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer was dissolved over the Montague-Chelmsford report. Mrs. Besant's famous description of it as "unworthy of England to offer and of India to accept" was not perhaps the opinion of the close student of constitutional history that Mr. Iyer was. I am not in the secret, but it is a matter of public knowledge that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer came almost into open collision—I had said actually—before they left for England. Mrs. Besant was violently vascillating. Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer was steady. And perhaps Mrs. Besant's conversion to moderation is more directly traceable to Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer than the public can ever have an idea of.

Of course Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer, when he returned from England with the glamour that necessarily attaches to the foremost Indian witness that he was, could not but be marked out by the extremists. And he was particularly the target of non-Brahmins, for it was an open secret that this Brahmin 'archenemy'—from the non-Brahmin viewpoint—had rallied the progressive non-Brahmins, inspired Messers Kesava Pillai and Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon,

and established the Madras Presidency Association. Thus he was the 'dear' enemy of two powerful parties. In the Moderate circles, too, the late partner of Mrs. Besant was not welcome. They were thankful for his evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. They praised him so long as that praise tended to the well-being of their party, but the old fossils dreaded contact with a living dynamo that he was. How could Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer be deified a hero when the halo played over this young figure, when the eyes naturally turned to this Arjun in their battle array ? Thanks to the manners and jealousy that pass for public spirit in Madras, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, who would have been led as a hero in any other province, was mercilessly pursued by an unnatural non-Brahmin—non-co-operation combination—so far as he was concerned.

But even against such combination be held his own. He stood for election. He contested an inch to inch combat with the non-Brahmin Hindenburgs. And he was elected at the very teeth of opposition. Perhaps the contact with the worse side of human character in such occasions induced him to trample down his victory and accept the refuse of Mr. S. Sreenivasa

Iyengar—always his rival in law and public estimation. The secret of his Advocate Generalship is enshrouded in mystery.

While a good deal is known of the essentially public activities of a politician of position, almost nothing is known of his private life. Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, however, holds a unique place in private esteem for his charities —to the student and to every public institution. He earned as much as the foremost lawyer in Madras, but he gave away freely and with a willing mind. He delighted in helping others, in extricating public spirited men from those little financial worries incidental to existence. Never could a man, placed by talent and by circumstances in a position of affluence, have spent his money more usefully than he. To him was given to feel the peculiar satisfaction derived from lending a helping hand to many a deserving man, to cheer many a drooping student and to keep alive many an institution that aimed at the amelioration of the poor or of the middle class. Extremists as well as non-Brahmins acknowledge this with enthusiasm.

Dr. NAIR.

Within recent times there has been no such striking figure in politics as that of Dr. Nair. A fluent speaker, a ready writer and a man of large and varied knowledge, he easily had a following and was acknowledged the best platform speaker in Madras. He was a municipal commissioner and was a newspaper writer of no small distinction. He was the editor of the *Madras Standard*, and some of the best articles in the *Hindu* are traced to his pen. He was never in need of a following and there was no Governor of Madras who did not dread him as, on the eve of his retirement Dr. Nair would raise large dust and create a sensation from which it was impossible for him to eacape without a deep wound; but all this said and done the fact has to be acknowledged that he never filled the large space that he ought to have filled. The reason for this was that he was what may be called unreliable. He was a brilliant man and so had the failing of a brilliant man, namely, hasty views and ready conclusions to which he stuck. And he used his undoubted ability to prove that he was right even when he was wrong. No one knew which way he would go—and if the truth had to be told, perhaps he

never knew it himself. He went his way and whichever way he went, he could easily carry his followers. He was brilliant. He was a terrible satirist. He could make people unhappy. He pursued an enemy to the grave. He never spared a friend or foe for the simple reason that he had neither a friend nor foe. To him all were equal.

In the Corporation he was a force and he made himself felt. The executive trembled as he exposed, but then there were times when he sided them as against the people and then the people were faced with a foe whose tactics told. The result was that neither the executive nor the rate payers trusted him. Both feared him. He was a walking volcano. No one knew when he would burst. And when he burst, the lava flowed over both the friend and the foe.

The sensation that he created and that brought him at once to the front of politics was when he threw up his commissionership on the plea that certain voters who had promised him votes did not vote. It happened this way. He was a candidate for the Imperial Council by the Madras Legislative Council. But when the results of the election were announced it was found that he had only four votes. Only four

votes for a leader and a giant as he was! That was certainly striking. He came out with a stinging letter in the *Hindu* saying how he stood on the distinct promise made to him that he would be supported. But those who had made the promise had drawn back at the last moment. And he refused to have anything to do with people who could say one thing and do another. He ceased to be a member of the Corporation to mark his sense of disgust. It created a sensation and for a time the feelings against those who were supposed to have cheated Dr. Nair was great.

But Dr. Nair could not stand out of public life and live any more than a fish can subsist out of water, and so we find him the forceful figure that he was.

The greatest achievement for which he will be remembered both by friends and foes was his connection with the non-Brahmin movement, Although Sir Tyagaraja Chettiar was the moving spirit, he was neither a speaker nor a writer—he was essentially an actor. He passed on the work of propoganda to Dr. Nair who was the editor of the organ of the movement and easily the praise and blame attached to himself. He liked it immensely. The more

vehemently he was abused the more reckless he grew; the Government patted him on his back; the Anglo-Indian papers were singing his praise. The entire non-Brahmin communtiy which had been roused from sleep, as it were, began to worship him. Both his tongue and pen were in great demand. He led the movement, and led it at the break neck space with which it is associated. He startled many of his friends. He cared a fig. He threw himself entirely into the hands of the bureaucracy, he who had waged at times a violent war with them. All the same he carried the day. I am not here to argue whether he was right or wrong. I do not know whether he ever asked himself whether he was serving his country at all. He had something to do; he was making himself warm. He never cared for the rest. It was just like Dr. Nair. He used all his brilliant powers for the purpose that he had on hand. If he had lived long he would have led against the movement. If only he had been more steady, he would have left a name which would have lived. As it is he will be remembered only in Madras and that by non-Brahmins alone. What a fall ?

As a friend he was true and he was followed, but he had certain principles to which he strictly

held. He never asked a favour of another man; he never had a request to ask of any officer in behalf of a friend. That made him a dangerous enemy, for he was under obligations to none. He did his duty, that is what he considered his duty for the time being. His knowledge of affairs was vast; but he never took pains to study and form conclusions. What others took deep study to get at he got by mere intuition. As a man he was great indeed, but if a great man wants to commit political suicide, he could not do better than follow Dr. Nair's methods.

DEWAN BAHADUR KARUNAKARA MENON.

In the more serene side of politics no one has played a more important part than Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon. He was one of those who, after a distinguished career in the University, chose journalism as a career, and after years of experience in the *Hindu*, of which he was the editor after Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, he started his own paper on the purchase of the *Hindu* by Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar. As editor of the *Hindu* he had built up a reputation as a sober journalist, with moderate views; he had a high conception of his duties and did not live on mere sensationalism. When the Boer war broke out, he had almost become unpopular by strongly supporting the British as against the Boers, on the principle that he should stand by our King and Government as against an outside enemy, whatever our domestic differences.

The Government of Madras naturally admired a writer whose contribution to modern literature and the current of thought was marked by such robust common sense and thought. He was easily a marked man and when the Malabar Marriage Bill was under contemplation, young Mr. Karunakara Menon, who was not many years

past his college career, was himself a witness, and Sir C. Sankaran Nair himself has often acknowledged that Mr. Karunakara Menon was one of the most powerful opponents his Bill had to meet. Sir T. Muthusawmi Iyer, the President of the Commission, was favourably impressed with the witness and, ever since, admitted Mr. Menon into his select circle of friends. Thus, even while young, he had the unique distinction of moving in high company.

Another forceful personality with whom Mr. Karunakara Menon moved in close company and who admired the judgment and wisdom of the budding journalist was Raja Sir T. Madhava Row, who had retired from the Dewanship of Baroda and was living in retirement in Madras. Mr. Karunakara Menon attracted his notice by his writings in the *Hindu* of which he was only a sub-editor at the time. Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, who was the editor, was so impressed with his assistant that he left no opportunity to advance his protege and hence it was that Mr. Karunakara Menon, even while a sub-editor, found himself a member of the most influential club in the city. When Mr. Subramania Iyer went to England in connection with the Welby Commission, Mr. Karunakara Menon was in

charge of the paper, ably assisted by Mr. Natarajan now the editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* of Bombay.

Mr. Karunakara Menon found himself faced with an entirely new phase of affairs almost with the birth of his paper the '*Indian Patriot*'. He found himself in the midst of an earthquake and it was easy for his friends to see, almost from the start, that the days had set when sobriety in thought and word paid a journalist. What was required were just the reverse—sensationalism and intemperance. The appearnce of the bomb in Bengal synchronised with the publication of the *Patriot*, and he made the fatal mistake—from the point of view of the Proprietor of a Daily Indian Newspaper—of violently pitting himself on the side of law and order. The *Patriot* ceased to appeal to youngmen who, although they did not support the bomb, were not displeased at the violent manifestations of public feeling against the bureaucracy.

Almost from the very beginning the *Patriot* had to contend against financial difficulties owing to this stern policy of the paper on the side of sobriety. When the Deccani shoe came behind Kudiram Bose's bomb at Muzzafarpur and the politician was confronted with a crisis in his

own home, the *Patriot* threw itself on the side of Mehta and Rash Behari Gosh and was easily the only mouthpiece of the Congress all over India. The writings in the *Patriot* used to be read all over the country, by the sober sections of the people and by the Government, who could not help admiring the courage and calmness of a journalist under the fire of the extreme among the agitators. The Government contributed to the ruin of the *Patriot* as a going concern by showing its gratitude to its editor by the grant of a Dewan Bahadur—which, to the lay man, was a sign that the editor had been purchased by the Sircar. The non-Brahmin movement and the support that the Government gave it sounded the death knell for the man who had spent a fortune in fighting for his principles, not compromise them for the sake of the Government. He attacked the movement as retrograde, although he was in sympathy with the social reform side of it. The Government forgot all his previous services and in his age and failing health he was the subject of attention of the Criminal Intelligence Department. The non-Brahmins had counted upon his support and on his organ, negotiations for the purchase of which were almost completed. But he could not agree to

be the mouthpiece of a party that attacked the Montague-Chelmsford reforms as too advanced —not that they meant so little. And since he had not the confidence of the extremists and since he had not the support of the non-Brahmins and since the cost of the production of a newspaper had gone high, he had to sell his paper and retire from public life.

It is a tragedy when we contemplate how near he came to find a responsible position and how to-day he is completely effaced where he wrought hard and unceasingly and unselfishly for the advancement of his country. He might have been the Dewan of Travancore had Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer lived—for he had a high opinion of Mr. Karunakara Menon and wanted that a statesman of his claibre should have practical oppurtunities. 'You are not a journalist in the modern sense of the term' he would say, 'You are a statesman. You cannot run a newspaper without sensationalism now a days. You must go elsewhere.' Sir Arthur Lawley consulted Mr. Karunakara Menon frequently and he exerted an influence over the Government which was the envy of his enemies and the pride of his friends. But conditions underwent a revolution with Mrs. Besant's Home Rule campaign, and

with the tremendous upheaval of popular opinion.

A good man and with a high sense of responsibility to his country and countrymen, Mr. Menon was modest, retiring, and helpful to all. He sympathised with Young India and went out of the way to use his influence in their behalf with the University and the Government. It may be said of Mr. Menon that he exerted, like Mr, Malabari, more influence with the Government personally than through his newspaper. His force of character, his wise advice, his political foresight were all valued by the Government. Sir Arthur Lawley's term of office was not noted for its popularity; but it would have been more unpopular still if Mr. Karunakara Menon and Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer had not exerted themselves. It is a pity that the public cannot see behind the veil, and the civilians who knew him well and sought his advice, like Sir Harold Stuart and Sir Alexander Cardew, are not here to acknowledge his services, now that he is dead.

One cannot help admiring the sacrifice of a man for the sake of his principles as one realises that Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon would have been the first minister under the new

regime if only he had placed himself at the head of the non-Brahmin movement, which was marked out for him and for Dr. Nair and Sir P. T. Tyagaraja Chettiar. He knew it. He felt that the movement will appeal to the less responsible section of the population and would spread like wild fire. He predicted that in the elections the Brahmins would lose heavily. He knew the sacrifice that he was making when he deliberately went against the Government which he had supported because that Government supported the non-Brahmin movement. He knew the sacrifice it involved when he allied himself with Mrs. Besant in her campaign against the non-Brahmin movement—he who had sought in vain to stem her wild, raging political campaign. And yet he did not hesitate to commit political suicide, as it were, than go against his own principles. His life must leave an indelible footprint in the sands of Indian political life.